

## **The official justification for awarding the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award to the Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre from Ireland**

The Jury of the Max van der Stoel Award has decided to honour Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre from Ireland with the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award in recognition of its continued efforts to strengthen the genuine integration of Ireland's society by advocating and protecting the rights of the Traveller and Roma communities.

In Ireland, the Roma and Traveller communities have suffered a long history of multiple and intersectional discrimination. Both communities experience poverty, unemployment, lack of educational opportunity, decreased life expectancy, cultural bias and social stereotyping. Since its foundation in 1985, the Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre has recognized the need for solidarity between Roma and Irish Traveller communities based on their shared experiences of racism and social exclusion.

This non-governmental organization (NGO) courageously and continuously seeks to celebrate the cultures and traditions of both communities in an inclusive manner by advocating for participation, social justice and genuine equality at the regional, national and international levels. Pavee Point supports the integration of Ireland's diverse society through education and healthcare initiatives, and works to combat violence against women and support participation in programmes that bridge economic and societal inequalities. In addition, Pavee Point raises awareness within broader society of the fundamental rights of Roma and Travellers, and works to eradicate negative stereotypes and discrimination of these communities, including of women and children. In promoting the status of Travellers, Pavee Point successfully lobbied the Republic of Ireland to extend official legal recognition for this community as a minority ethnic group in March 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how persistent societal inequalities have left many vulnerable communities in an even more precarious situation. Pavee Point has been actively involved in various initiatives, including co-operating with national authorities, to mitigate the negative implications of the pandemic for the Roma and Traveller communities.

Acknowledging its activism, community-based approach, and tireless commitment to advocate for Roma and Travellers, including by amplifying their voices during these times of heightened discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jury made the unanimous decision to reward Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre with the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award.